

A

TRANSCRIPT OF MSNBC REPORTER STEVE KORNACKI ON "THE RACHEL MADDOW SHOW," DECEMBER 18, 2013

"He's played a pretty big role in my professional life. I used to work for him. He gave me my first big break. You could say I owe my career to him. I'm going to explain this to you. It was the summer of 2002. I just graduated from college. I've gone to L.A. with some friends. I failed miserably. And I was back in Massachusetts. I wanted to get into political journalism. I was also broke. I also had no leads. I used the cliché about how the rejection letters were piling up, but I wasn't even getting rejection letters to every news outlet I reached out to, I just didn't exist. And then, one day, when I was close to giving up, I saw a listing for a site in New Hampshire, to cover the primary up there in 2004. There were a million political news sites out there. But remember, this was 2002, the idea was exotic. The listing came with an AOL address, I was curious, I was excited, I was desperate.

I wrote a long e-mail and poured out my heart, pretty much, explaining how interested I was in politics, how badly I wanted to write about it for a career. How much this opportunity would mean to me.

The ad was vague. I didn't know who was on the other end of the e-mail. The response came a few days later, the New Hampshire job was filled. But they had another site. It was their main site, it was in New Jersey. There was an opening there. They asked if I was interested.

Well, I was a Massachusetts kid and knew nothing about Jersey, but you bet I was interested. The email was signed by someone named Wally Edge, which sounded like a funny name, and it turned out there was a reason for that. The site, it was called politicsnj.com was an anonymously owned Web site. Wally Edge was the owner's pseudonym. He'd taken it from a former New Jersey governor from a long time ago named Walter Edge.

The site was about two years old back then. It had really taken off in political circles. The guy who ran it had great sources, unmatched institutional knowledge.

The newspapers were barely playing the online game back then. He was way ahead of them. And now, he wanted to go mainstream. He wanted a real reporter, someone with a real name to put on the site to do real reporting, to be accountable in real life.

I had my interview with Wally online. It's something I'm always going to remember. I was staying with my aunt and uncle. My little cousin helped me set up AOL instant messenger, so I could talk to this mysterious guy.

He quizzed about politics, and I guess I did well enough because he offered me the job. It paid almost nothing, there were no benefits, and I didn't hesitate to say yes.

And something I never regretted. For the next three years, I lived and breathed New Jersey politics. I lived and breathed New Jersey and loved it. I didn't cover it out of the statehouse like most reporters. I covered the county bosses, I covered the turf wars, I covered the machine battles, that's where the real action was. That's what the real action. It's for the real

decisions that matter were made.

Every state is unique, but they don't play politics anywhere else the way they do in Jersey. I never went to grad school but I like to tell people I got a master's degree in practical politics in those three years.

When I started that job, Wally helped to tell who people were. He helped fill in back stories. He suggested angles to pursue, all on instant messenger, of course. Mostly he gave me autonomy, I knew what I needed to cover, I learned how I wanted to cover it and I did it and he didn't interfere.

And basically, it worked. I learned a ton. I made more than my share of mistakes but I did a lot of work I'm proud of, too. We got the credibility that Wally wanted when he hired me. I even ended up co-hosting a show on New Jersey politics. There you see a clip of it, like from 2004 or something.

When I started, Wally offered to share his real identity with me, but I refused. I figured that everyone was going to be asking me who Wally Edge was and I wanted to be able to honestly tell people I had no idea.

It was only when I was leaving that site after three years, I finally gave in. So, we met at a steakhouse in north Jersey. Actually, it's a steakhouse that's not far from the George Washington Bridge. And he introduced himself.

I always figured he was an older guy, I thought he was a retired reporter maybe in his 70s. That was my guess, everyone I talked to before that had guess, too, there were all sorts of theories on who Wally Edge was.

But when he introduced himself to me in person that was the first time I had ever heard the name David Wildstein. I had no idea who he was. He was in his mid-40s. He's a lifelong political junky. He'd even been a mayor of the town in New Jersey, in Livingston. It's Chris Christie's hometown. He'd been a mayor there in his 20s.

We had dinner. It was nice. We shook hands, soon off I was off to my next job at *Roll Call*, down in Washington. That was in 2005, eight years ago.

I went on to D.C., I went to a few other places. I finally landed here.

Wally ended up selling the site, and going back into politics, taking that job with the Port Authority, the job where he gave the order to close those bridge lanes.

We stayed in touch periodically in all those years. When I got hired here at MSNBC, I sent him a note. I told him I'd never forget he took a chance on me when no one else would, the job that's been an incredible opportunity and I'd always appreciated it. That's exactly how I will always feel."

http://www.nbcnews.com/id/53994309/ns/msnbc-rachel_maddow_show/

TRANSCRIPT OF STEVE KORNACKI INTERVIEW WITH WNYC REPORTER DAVID FURST, MAY 27, 2015

"Web journalism was kind of at its infancy...he (David Wildstein) was looking to have sort of a legitimate face on this thing, because he had great information, he had great sources, he had great reporting. The site had built a lot of credibility based on this. But he wanted somebody out there with a real name, a real face, to have some accountability for it, so that was going to be my job.

I've never met anybody with the type of institutional knowledge of New Jersey state politics and government that David Wildstein has. But I've never met anybody in politics with the kind of instant recall...he can do national politics just as well... it's how he built his credibility. A lot of times people read about him now and he's described as a blogger – and there's almost a pejorative there where he's just a guy spouting off without accountability online. He built credibility by showing...the most influential people in New Jersey politics that he knew what he was talking about, and in a lot of cases, he knew more than they knew. Even they didn't know who he was, he earned their respect and earned their trust, and over the course of ten years there, there were very few people from the highest levels on down in New Jersey politics who weren't in some way communicating with him, trading notes with him...

When I got hired full-time at MSNBC in June of 2012, I made sure to write a note to Wally Edge and David Wildstein and telling him 'I'm not here today. I'm not getting this job today. I'm not where I am if you didn't take a chance on me in the summer of 2002.' He had no reason to. I was a nobody out of Boston University living in Massachusetts and trying to convince him that I was worth taking a shot on. And he did. I feel lucky what's happened to me in my career and I'm mindful that I owe a lot of that to him. I loved the three years I spent writing for that website. I loved it. It remains the best job I've ever had. He was a great boss to work for because he knew the game of politics so well that if you were in a situation that if you were in a conflict with a campaign or in conflict with a press secretary, he had your back. I could think of countless examples like that, where he had my back. He knew exactly what to say on my behalf and on behalf of our site.

I have a lot of positive things to say about David Wildstein, and I know it's not necessarily what people know about him who have been following just the bridge story."

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/david-wildstein-great-boss/>

B

Robyn Wildstein



May 26, 2017

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

I met David when he was in his late twenties, and we recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. I have known him to be caring, loyal and kind, a wonderful husband, father, son, and friend. He held my hand during a stillbirth and its devastating aftermath. Together, we have raised three children who have developed into thoughtful and decent young adults. David has always been quick to give his time to those in need, and has taught our children by example to contribute their energy and resources to charitable causes. During our 25 years of marriage, I have known David to be a man who is generous, trustworthy and hard-working. He expects more from himself than anyone else. David briefly lost his way in his earnestness to please his "one constituent." He is supremely embarrassed about this aberration in his adult life.

As your honor is aware, David cooperated fully with the United States Attorney and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, turning over his e-mails and text messages at the start of the investigation of the George Washington Bridge lane realignment. He also turned over these documents to the legislative committee. He did not wait for the U.S. government to come knocking at our door, but rather agreed to cooperate from the outset of this matter. David was fully candid with the U.S. Attorney's office about everything that he has done in his political career, including things that he is not proud of. I believe it is important to note that these embarrassing incidents that defense counsel used to paint an unflattering portrait of David occurred when he was a very young man. David disclosed all this information to the prosecutors to be fully transparent. Watching David come under attack for things he did more than thirty years ago, characterized in the most unflattering way, was a painful period for him and our entire family.

David has expressed remorse countless times for his part in the events of September 2013. He has told his children, his extended family and his friends that he genuinely regrets his role to

realign the lanes, and wishes that he had considered the damage this method of political retribution would sow. His behavior was wrong and ill-advised, but David would never carry out this plan on his own. He respects authority and fully understands the chain of command that exists in government and at the Port Authority. I have witnessed the soul-crushing punishment of my husband's self-doubt and guilt that has accompanied the realization of his willing participation in such a thoughtless act.

David was successful in the private sector when one of his longtime and closest friends, Bill Baroni, asked him to take a position at the Port Authority. David told me that he was excited by the challenges that would face him and anxious to make a difference and have a positive impact on his community. I know how hard David worked in that position and how seriously he took his responsibilities. He left our home before 6:00 every morning and rarely made it home in time for our family's 7:30 dinner. It was not unusual for him to come home after 10:00 at night, following a long commute from Manhattan. It was routine for him to take calls throughout the evening, sometimes being awakened during the night, and all through weekends and holidays. It was not uncommon for David to go into the office on the weekend. I spent many Saturdays and Sundays accompanying David on visits to Port Authority facilities to check on projects, when I would have preferred to be elsewhere with my husband.

During Superstorm Sandy, David spent more than a week at the Emergency Operations Center, often spending the night in a sleeping bag on the floor. He took his mission to represent the Governor's interests at the Port Authority seriously, and I am proud of his accomplishments, especially in his sincere effort to create jobs during a severe economic downturn. It was disheartening to watch David being pilloried by defense counsel, with no one attesting to how hard he worked and to what he accomplished. David did a tremendous amount of good work at the Port Authority, however the magnitude of those achievements have gone largely unreported, despite the praise he received from Governor Christie during his employment.

Although I consider my husband a workaholic, David has been able to balance the demands of a career and still make time for his family. He is an attentive and loving husband and father. For more than twenty years, he helped support my mother. Prior to her death, he made time each day for his grandmother. He never hesitates to help his friends. For David, one of the greatest consequences of his actions has been the loss of some very close friends who were an important part of his life. I do not believe that he will ever get over this loss.

Over the past three years, I have witnessed my husband's concerted effort to improve himself and the lives of others. David has battled weight issues since childhood and in 2014 he took the initiative to lead a healthier life. He worked out regularly and completely changed his eating habits, and I was proud to watch him lose more than 90 pounds. He did this through the same kind of hard work and dedication that I have witnessed throughout our marriage.

Politics has been an important part of David's life for as long as I have known him, and permanently losing his ability to participate in politics has been especially difficult. I respect that he has pushed himself to pursue new and other endeavors. I have been impressed with his efforts

to learn new skills. He is constantly taking classes to expand his own knowledge and has participated in a local theater workshop as a playwright.

Your honor, David is extremely contrite and is both personally embarrassed, and more importantly, completely regretful of his conduct at issue here. It is constantly in our thoughts and has had a dramatic impact on our lives. His actions have been difficult for our children, who love and admire their father and have found it difficult to hear what some people say about him. They too had to deal with the constant presence of reporters outside our home stemming from David's connection to a story that involved a nationally prominent Governor. There was a period where press remained outside our home 24 hours a day for 29 days; I must accept this because of what David did, although it remains hard to understand why a reporter decided to chase our teenage son.

I especially admire how David has tried to protect his family from any additional pain. I have offered to accompany David to court each time he has appeared before your honor as a way of reciprocating the kindness and support he consistently offers me. David has repeatedly declined my request, as well as the offer of several close friends to do the same. We discussed asking our children to write letters on his behalf, but David felt strongly that he would not subject them to the discomfort that process could create. More than anything, David regrets how these events have affected our family.

I trust that when you pass judgment upon my husband, your honor will consider the truly decent, kind and conscientious man I know and love. David is quick to admit his faults and attempt to make amends. In the aftermath of this incident, there was never any question that he would take responsibility for his actions, tell the truth, and accept the consequences. I hope that your honor will be lenient, taking into consideration the level of cooperation and remorse David has demonstrated. He still has much to contribute, and will continue to use his talents for the betterment of our community.

Respectfully and sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robyn Wildstein". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Robyn" and last name "Wildstein" clearly distinguishable.

Robyn Wildstein

C

Luis C. Marrero, M.D.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

June 1, 2017

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton,

I have known David Wildstein for over 20 years. I still remember the first day I met David. I had just finished my fellowship training in Neonatology a specialty of Pediatrics and had moved my family to northern New Jersey to be close to my new hospital. We did not know anyone in our new town and having grown up in Union City, New Jersey the suburban experience seemed daunting. David stopped by, introduced himself and welcomed us to the neighborhood. He later invited our family to his home to meet his wife and children. Our families have been friends ever since.

The David I know is an extremely hard working, open minded, caring and insightful man. He is always available to help a friend without needing to be asked. I hope that by mentioning a few examples of the David Wildstein that my family came to know and love, that I can shed some light on the man I know away from the enthrall of politics and politicians. I practice medicine as a Neonatologist at the Children's Hospital of St. Joseph's Reginal Medical Center. Our hospital and physicians provide care to some of the smallest and critically ill premature infants. We have some of the best outcome statistics in the state while providing care to one of the most vulnerable inner city populations. While many of my neighbors and friends have only questioned why I work in Paterson, David has shown genuine interest in my work, my patients and has understood why I choose to work helping these families.

One day I was asking David's advice on colleges for my older daughter. He had just spent innumerable hours helping his daughter with her college search and was eager to give us advice from his current experience. My daughter was just beginning to explore areas of study and college choices. When David heard that she was interested in Journalism he

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton

June 1, 2017

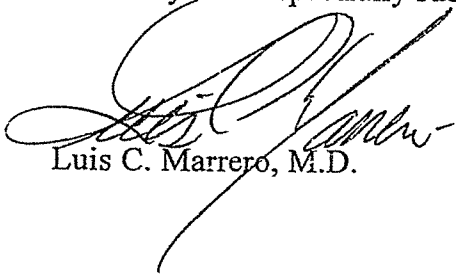
Page 2

immediately offered to have her spend some time at the New York Observer where he was currently working. My daughter was very excited about the possibility, but disappointed when we were not able to get her to the commuter bus to make the trip to New York City. We thanked David for the opportunity, but explained our difficulty. Without our asking, David said that he would drive her to work with him. David picked up our daughter in the morning and drove her home each day so that she could have this exposure to journalism. She went on to study English literature in college and graduated with honors.

I just want to give one last example of David's kindness and openness. Seven years ago my family planned a wedding celebration at our home. My young cousin who had lived with us during his college years came home to announce that he was engaged to his partner and they planned to be married as soon as the District of Columbia passed their marriage equality law. Because of finances they had to put off a ceremony, but were still overwhelmed with the excitement of finally being able to be married. David was so happy for Robert that he volunteered to be the officiant at their ceremony. It was a beautiful outdoor wedding for everyone to see with David front and center leading the service.

While writing this letter I found myself happy recalling experiences with David and at the same time saddened by the situation that David is in. Although he will not discuss and I have not asked about the case I have seen the emotional toll it has taken on him and his entire family. David has expressed to me his deep regret for the pain he has caused his family and friends. He has not been able to hide the anguish he feels for his family's pain and the friendships that have been destroyed.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luis C. Marrero', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Luis C. Marrero, M.D.

D

James D. Weinstein

~~1007 [REDACTED]~~
~~[REDACTED]~~

June 1, 2017

The Hon. Susan D. Wigenton
U. S. District Judge
District of N.J.
Martin Luther King Building and US Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

I am writing on behalf of my friend, David Wildstein, whom I have known since 1984.

I graduated college in 1984 and came home to work on Dean Gallo's congressional campaign in the 11th district. David was involved in Essex County politics and running for Livingston Town Council. We became friends, he won the election, and 6 months later I won election to the South Orange Village Board of Trustees.

We would have dinner after our council meetings, sometimes after midnight, at various diners in Essex County. We both left elective politics after one term in office – I started business school a year later, and finished my term in office, and David similarly left office having served as councilman and mayor.

David joined his family's business, working both in NJ and in Georgia and travelling around the country. I became a banker and moved to Hoboken. Nevertheless we stayed in close touch; we worked together on Bob Franks' successful campaign for Congress in 1992 and unsuccessful campaign for Senate in 2000.

David was an usher at my wedding in 1997, and I attended his children's Bar and Bas Mitzvahs, as he attended my twin daughters' Bas Mitzvah in 2014.

We have had frequent breakfasts together, usually at a midway point between Montville and Hoboken: The Tick Tock Diner. We have often discussed work, politics, and especially family.

This is what I know about David: he is encyclopedic in his political knowledge; he is hard working, devoted, loyal, a great father and husband, and a great friend. On numerous occasions while he was working at the Port Authority we discussed the difficulty of serving multiple masters: politicians in Trenton, bureaucracy at the Authority, semi-autonomous unions, both in the private and public sector. As well, we discussed public policy – the need to get New Jersey's priorities taken care of – the Bayonne Bridge raising, now successfully completed, and the

Goethels Bridge replacement, now well underway. There was nothing I was doing nearly as complicated, even though I have enjoyed a successful career of 26 years at a major commercial bank.

David and I both left politics in the 1980's because the fights were too petty, and the opportunities for a career seemed limited. David and I both believed that a lifetime in office was not good for the people or for us as individuals. We both preferred the private sector and eventually, being husbands and fathers. While I did no more than volunteer on campaigns over the next decade and write a handful of checks over 30 years, David was drawn back in.

I only wish that I had advised him to stay away.

We would spend more than half our breakfasts at the Tick Tock talking about what was going on with David's three children, as well as Robyn, his wife, and I would discuss my three kids, as well as Alicia, my wife. We spent more time discussing family, yet due to his job, he was up in the morning well before anyone and was out the door without seeing anyone awake. Similarly at night, he might be in Trenton rather than NYC, and was certainly not going to make it home for dinner. His devotion to two masters was ultimately what got him in trouble, and he certainly has apologized, admitted his error, and assisted the government by telling the whole truth.

As someone who has known him since he was 23 (and I was 22), I can state that he has always been serious, he has always been a team player, and most importantly, whatever his failings, he has done a lot of good. Not just for his family or for his business, or for the people he worked for, but for the public.

David engaged in public service twice in his life. He was one of the most active mayors Livingston ever had, improving performance of multiple areas of government by hiring a top manager to be City Manager, as well as supporting the neediest in the community. I specifically remember David going to Trenton and lobbying the governor's staff to keep a "Christmas Tree" line item in the budget for the Stepping Stones Preschool. Stepping Stones was a preschool sponsored by the Association for Retarded Citizens of Essex County. It was in its nascent years, and had failed state fire suppression requirements and was in danger of closing. Adding to the difficulty was that it was located in a church basement. David and Bob Franks, our Assemblyman, and my employer at the time, went to Trenton and successfully overcame executive branch skepticism and got the funding. When I drive by the church at Northfield Ave and Laurel Ave to this day, I remember what David did.

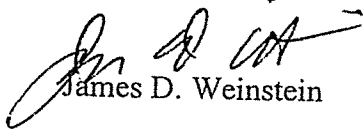
Also as mayor, he fought NIMBYs to license a group home for the mentally disabled in Livingston. A somewhat large group of residents fought the project, and the likely residents of the home, although from Essex County, were not from Livingston. He stood up to the residents and got the home sited. I faced a similar issue in South Orange, and am very proud to this day to see a Low Income Senior Housing Project at the corner of Grove Road and South Orange Avenue.

David and I went through many battles separately, and together. And while at the Port Authority, he never forgot his mandate: defend NJ's interests at an institution that frequently acted as if NY

was the senior or only partner, rather than equal partner. Every day, as I pass through the Port Authority Bus Terminal, I realize that David's work was left unfinished. Periodically, as I read that NYC politicians want NJ residents to get off the bus in Secaucus and then take a train to Penn Station, I understand what David dealt with just to get two bridges (not the GW) fixed and replaced.

I know that David did wrong. He knows that he did wrong. When I make a mistake, It costs my employer in loan losses. It does not cost people the way David's mistake did. But if I make too many bad loans, I will lose my job, and my reputation. David has already lost his job, and his political reputation, as well as many, many friendships. But I would urge you to consider that he has expressed remorse, has supported the government prosecution, and therefore does not deserve to lose his freedom.

Sincerely,



James D. Weinstein

E

May 23, 2017

Jordan Lieberman

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Judge, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building & US Courthouse
50 Walnut Street, Room 4015
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton,

I have known David since June 2000, when he hired me to the business that operated PoliticsNJ.com. I worked directly for David through about 2005, and found him to be kind, brilliant, and generous with his time and advice.

Before you sentence David, I feel that you should hear directly from me.

In the five years that I worked for David, he was an important mentor to me and dozens of other young political professionals around New Jersey. David was incredibly supportive of our team, going well beyond what a business owner would normally do. David is the kind of person who bought a suit for a reporter who couldn't afford one, drove six hours to meet another reporter who needed help with her living arrangements, and took great joy in quietly seeing younger people succeed.

He is the kind of person who would mentor campaign staff on how to avoid trouble. He would never take credit for the fact that dozens of professionals in our community owe their career to his mentorship. The truth is that David is too modest to tell the many stories about how he helped people across the state.

David is a good man who has already paid a tremendous price for what he has done. I write to you today to ask for leniency in sentencing for David. He has much to contribute if given the opportunity.

Respectfully,

Jordan L.

Jordan Lieberman

F

Julie Roginsky
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

May 30, 2017

Dear Judge Wigenton,

I am writing on my behalf of my close friend David Wildstein, whom I have known for over a decade and whom I consider to be a member of my extended family. By way of background, I have been a political consultant in New Jersey for over twenty years and have worked for almost every single statewide Democratic candidate during that time.

The public narrative about David over the last several years does not reflect the man I have known for many years. He and I first met in person through a mutual friend in 2005 and bonded over our shared love of politics. He quickly introduced me to his wife and children and I was immediately struck by the fact that he was both an incredibly hands-on father and the most attentive husband I had ever seen.

David has been portrayed in media accounts as hyper-partisan but this depiction could not be further from the truth. When he founded and ran his influential website, PoliticsNJ, he was completely non-partisan in his approach. Despite the fact that he was then a lifelong Republican and I am a lifelong Democrat, his website was always fair to me, as it was to those David felt dealt fairly and honestly with him. There are many people throughout the state, on both sides of the aisle, who have called me over the past several years to recount acts of kindness that David performed as the anonymous "Wally Edge." They, too, take issue with the one-dimensional portrayal of David Wildstein throughout this legal process.

In times of crisis, David has been among the first people I have called. There has never been a moment in the many years I have known him when he was not willing to lend an ear or provide a helping hand – even during the past several years when our families have lived thousands of miles.

Six years ago, I decided that I wanted to become a single mother by choice. David was extraordinarily supportive throughout this very emotional and physically taxing process. Shortly before my son's birth, I asked David to serve as his godfather and as the executor of my estate. Having observed David's interaction with his own children, there was no one I would trust more with my son's well-being. Despite the portrayal of David during the course of this trial, I continue to believe that today.

Since my son's birth, David has always made every effort to be involved in his life – even throughout the last several years, when he understandably had other important issues on which to focus. He has taught him about baseball, Simon Says, and (to his wife's and my consternation) spitballs. Despite the physical distance, my son considers David and his wife to be members of his family.

I have had a difficult time coming up with a way to explain to my son that he may not be able to see or speak to David for a long time. David has played such a loving and key role in his development that it would be an enormous loss to both of us if my son would have to spend the next several years growing up without David in our lives.

I realize that you have to consider many factors throughout this process. I also understand that David's poor decision to shut down access lanes to the George Washington Bridge hurt thousands of people across the region. But the many chapters of his life that include a deep commitment to his family and friends are much more representative of the David Wildstein I know than the portrayals of him that I have read about over the past year. I sincerely hope that the entirety of David's life will not be defined by one regrettable episode and that his many acts of kindness, which far outweigh any bad behavior, will be taken into account. I humbly ask you to consider this as you weigh your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Roginsky', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Julie Roginsky

A handwritten mark in the top right corner of the page. It consists of a large, stylized letter 'G' that is open on the right side. Inside the 'G', there is a small arrow pointing towards the right, following the curve of the letter.

The Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Re: David Wildstein

June 3, 2017

Dear Judge Wigenton:

My name is Arielle Schwarz and I'm writing on behalf of David Wildstein, my former boss at The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. I first met David in March of 2012 when I was asked to interview for an open position as his executive assistant at the Port Authority.

I will admit that the job as David's assistant fell into my lap - I didn't apply for it, and had absolutely no interest in working for a mass transportation agency. I had recently graduated with a degree in journalism from New York University, and had been interviewing for editorial positions with publishing houses at the time.

In fact, I only answered the call from the HR rep at the Port Authority because I thought it was a call about a magazine job I had recently interviewed for.

The HR rep, Cristina Kiley, described the position and said that David found my resume on a journalism job posting site - he was looking for someone who could write well and was interested in current events. For some inexplicable reason, the call intrigued me, so I went on the interview.

David and I had an immediate understanding that I saw no future for myself at a mass transportation agency, but he mentioned his past as a political blogger, and said that he knew lots of people in the media world. If I committed to being his assistant for a year and a half or two years, he would help me land a writing job.

Chalk it up to being 22 and blissfully naive, but I accepted the job. And being David's assistant for 21 months was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life.

Graduating from college in the midst of a recession and trying to find a job in magazine publishing (an objectively fading field with limited opportunities), I had an innate feeling in my bones that taking this job - this far-from-glamorous administrative job at a bistate transit agency - was the right move for me.

David immediately took me under his wing and took a chance on me despite my having only part-time jobs and college internships under my belt. He saw potential in me that I don't think I even saw in myself, and I'm forever indebted to him for that opportunity.

First and foremost, he was a great boss. He frequently joked that I never made mistakes, but that is quite untrue. I am sure that I made mistakes, but he was patient and kind with me, truly investing his time to make sure that I was learning and growing my skill set. He took the time to explain things to me so that I could clearly understand, and I always appreciated his direct and straightforward demeanor.

When I took the position at the Port Authority, I lived at home with my parents and had a commute of over two hours each way. I spent more than four hours in transit each workday for close to a year. But I loved my job so much and was so happy at work, I didn't even complain about the commute. And David was a major part of that happiness.

David and I became immediately close, which created a strong working relationship and personal friendship. On one of my first days, he said that in time, I'd be able to read his mind - to look at him and know exactly what he was thinking. I looked at this stranger, this man I barely knew, and didn't see how that could happen. But then, so very quickly, it did.

In a scenario where most executives simply care that there is someone around to answer their phones and set up meetings, David made sure I was always taken care of.

Just a few months after I started the job, my mom became extremely ill and much of the weight of her caretaking fell on my shoulders. My mom was in and out of the hospital multiple times, and I experienced severe anxiety and stress. David was effusively understanding - if I needed to leave early to take her to the hospital or be around to help her with something, he allowed me to, no questions asked. Going to work became my "safe space," a happy escape from the sadness and fear I went home to each night. How many people can say going to work is an escape for them?

During my time at the Port Authority, the administrative assistant that sat next to me fell ill with cancer and passed away. Ingrid and I had grown incredibly close, and my heart was shattered when she died. David immediately sprung to action, personally paying for her entire family to have dinner after the funeral services, and later on working with her son as he prepared to get his general education diploma (G.E.D.), because all his mom wanted was to see him get his degree. David purchased review books to help him pass his exam, and got him a position in the Port Authority's mailroom. He did all of this out of the kindness of his heart, and it truly touched me.

To see David painted in the media as some sort of cruel, heartless monster has been heartbreaking for me. David has made mistakes - some unbearably big mistakes - but he's not

a bad person. He's a good person that made a bad judgment call, and I know that weighs on him each day.

One of the many things that sticks out in my mind about David is how much he adores his family. His wife and children are his entire world - hearing him tell stories about them made me feel as if I knew them personally, though we'd never met. He joked that on *his* birthday, he'd take his wife to the jewelry store to buy *her* a gift for spending another year with him.

I felt so close to David that when I became engaged to my now-husband, I asked him to be the officiant at our wedding ceremony. I knew that he would perform a beautiful ceremony for us, and I didn't trust anyone but him to commemorate the most important moment of our lives together. There was a marked sadness in my heart on that day when he wasn't there to share in our joy.

David was the best boss I have ever had, and in the two full-time roles I had after I left the Port Authority, I have never found a boss that cared to mentor me and look out for me the way he did. Not being able to speak to him personally in the past few years has saddened me - not a day has gone by where I haven't thought of him by seeing a funny commercial on TV or remembering something that happened back then.

I know David regrets his actions with regard to the George Washington Bridge lane closures, and this lapse of judgment will live within him forever. His actions on this matter do not reflect the person I worked with at the Port Authority, and I hope Your Honor will consider this in his sentencing.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences with David Wildstein, and I am happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Very truly yours,



Arielle Alexis Schwarz

H

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
May 26, 2017

The Honorable Susan David Wigenton
United States District Judge, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building & U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street, Room 4015
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

Throughout the course of my 30 years of public service - as a Township Committeeman, a member of the New Jersey General Assembly, and in my six terms in the New Jersey State Senate - I have come to know and befriend countless remarkable women and men, both in and out of government and public life.

David Wildstein has been a friend of mine for a very long time. This is not a passing relationship - it has lasted for 34 years. I write to ask for your consideration of leniency during his sentencing.

I first met David in 1983 when, at age 21, he ran my re-election campaign in one of the most competitive legislative districts in New Jersey, winning by 566 votes.

After the campaign, I entrusted him to run the legislative services in my Senate office. He served as an important member of my staff for a few years. During that time, David was a loyal staff member. He always knew the difference between working for the greater good versus working toward his own self-interest. He was by no means a renegade.

David went on to be hired and entrusted by people who observed his performance as my campaign manager and legislative staffer. Chuck Hardwick, who would later become Speaker of the General Assembly, hired David as his Chief-of-Staff. In fact, prior to leaving politics to go into his family business, David held a rapid succession of jobs and positions in government with increasing responsibilities.

I don't believe that media coverage of the trial accurately captured the David I've known for so long. I don't believe people can cherry-pick a few stories about things David did in his 20's and use them to define who he is now as a 55 year old man. For every distasteful story I recently read about David's behavior in the 1980's, I can think of many more where he demonstrated how smart, successful and kind he truly is.

I had the opportunity to represent Livingston in the New Jersey State Legislature for approximately ten years. During that time, I saw some really good things that David did as a local elected official. While it's quite easy for the media to highlight some of the negative things people might say about David, it doesn't tell the entire story.

David is not a perfect person, but I haven't seen any perfect people in my nearly 50 years in and out of government. While David clearly made mistakes, and closing the bridge was a big one, it's clear to me that he realizes that what he did was wrong. David's behavior in the Fort Lee lane closures, disgusting as it was, is not a complete picture of who he is as a person. The good he has done in his life, and the contributions he has made, far outweigh this one mistake that will unfortunately define his career. In my view, as a Senator who was involved in the confirmation of prosecutors and judges, I believe David is not the kind of person who should be put in prison. He has already paid a heavy price - he will never work in politics again - and he has accepted responsibility for what he's done. He has done what few people are willing to do - he has taken responsibility for his actions.

Thank you for your consideration of leniency.

Sincerely,


C. Louis Bassano

I

DREW WILDSTEIN

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

May 24, 2017

Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
Judge of the United States District Court
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton,

My name is Drew Wildstein and I am David Wildstein's brother. Because I have known David my entire life, I believe I am uniquely positioned to provide you with insight into who he is as you consider his sentencing. I can speak as a person who has been David's lifelong friend, and as someone who has been in business with him.

I have always looked up to my brother, and through good times and difficult moments in our lives, that has never changed. He is someone I have always admired and respected. I played baseball my entire life. It was my love and still is today my passion. When I was cut from the varsity team at Arizona State University, I came home stressed and discouraged. David sat me down and said that life was about perseverance to accomplish a goal, regardless of what seemed to me to be insurmountable circumstances. He taught me to work harder and encouraged me to control my temper and display a confident calmness when under stress. I made the team the next year; and it was my brother who made me realize you do the best with what you have. David taught me to not quit easily.

Many years ago, David and I went to a baseball game together. I remember telling him on the way to the stadium that I hope to catch a foul ball. David reminded me of the time as a young boy when I caught my first ball. He said that if either of us gets a ball that day, we should give it to a kid, so that they could have the same memories we did. I agreed. During batting practice, one of the players tossed a ball to David. I begged him to let me have it. He looked at me and said that I needed to keep my word and honor my commitments. He handed me the ball, and I gave it to a kid sitting near us. I will never forget the smile on that kid's face. David taught me about the importance of keeping your word.

-2-

In my opinion, there is no better way to see what kind of man my brother David is than to look at how he handled the most terrible moment of his life, the loss of his child. I will never forget that day: My sister-in-law, Robyn, was at the very end of a full-term pregnancy with what would have been their third child. David took her to a regularly scheduled appointment with her obstetrician, and during the routine ultrasound, the doctor was unable to find a heartbeat. Robyn and David went to the hospital the next day so that Robyn could deliver their stillborn son. The following day, they went to the cemetery and buried him. I have never seen anyone as stoic as David was during that horrible time. As an uncle, I was having a hard time dealing with my own loss, and despite David's personal grief and pain, he spent time helping me cope. His supportive nature has served as a model for me. I watched him support his wife, his children and the rest of our family deal with a loss so horrible that I cannot even begin to imagine. My brother is always kind and compassionate at the times that it matters the most.

David is devoted to his family. He is a wonderful husband to Robyn, and father to his three children. I have never seen a marriage as strong as the bond between Robyn and David. In fact, I am envious of how much they love each other. It is no secret to anyone in the Wildstein family that David and Robyn are truly soulmates. His wife and his children are the most important parts of his life. He would do anything for Robyn and for his kids.

David's commitment to family extends beyond his own home. He is a wonderful son, brother and uncle. He was also an incredible grandson when our grandparents were alive. For the twelve years that our grandmother lived alone following the death of our grandfather, David was amazing in his devotion to her. He spoke to her every day, usually more than once a day. He always made time for her, and she was an important part of the lives of her great-grandchildren. During the days leading up to her passing away, David was at the hospital constantly, spending several nights in a chair in her room so that she would never feel alone.

I also had the honor of working with David in our family business. He is a man of tremendous compassion who treated people nicely and fairly. For me it is very frustrating to see how others depict David in the media, because to the people who really know him best, like me, this is not an accurate portrayal. David is a wonderful person. I admire him, I respect him, and I love him.

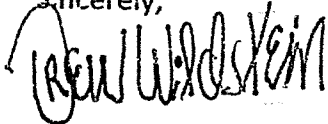
I can also attest to the fact that David has loved politics for as long as I can remember. I think when he got his first job, on the staff of a New Jersey State Senator for \$100-a-year, he was twelve and I was seven. I mentioned earlier that my passion is and will always be baseball. David's passion was always politics, and being forced to give that up for the remainder of his life is, for someone like him, like a knife through his heart.

-3-

One other thing I would like to mention is how proud I am that my brother, who battled weight issues his entire life, used the time that he was dealing with his legal issues to get serious about becoming healthy. I read a news story on line where a reporter wrote that this was a result of stress. I know David and I know that he typically gained weight during the most stressful times of his life, so the report was of course not true. David became committed to leading a healthier life for himself and for his family. He completely retrained himself how to eat, and for the first time in his life he became dedicated to exercise. I was as surprised as anyone to find out that in his early 50's, he became a lover of rock climbing. How he had handled himself over the past few years only increases my view of David as a role model.

What David did at the George Washington Bridge was wrong. I know that and so does he. I have never seen anyone more genuine in their regret and remorse. He knows that actions he took at the George Washington Bridge were wrong. I admire him for standing up and telling the truth, and for accepting his share of the responsibility. He very much regrets the pain that he has caused his family. I wish, of course, that this never happened, but now that it has, I respect the fact that my brother did the right thing and cooperated with those seeking to find the truth. My hope is that you will consider what David has accomplished in his life and the good that he has done for his family when you consider his sentence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Wildstein". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "D" and "W".

Drew Wildstein

2

Fritz Peterson
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

May 28, 2017

Hon. Susan S. Wigenton
Judge of the U.S. District Court, New Jersey
Martin Luther King Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton,

I am writing on behalf of my friend, David Wildstein. My relationship with David has revolved around our mutual love of baseball.

For the purposes of an introduction, I am a former major league baseball player. I pitched for the New York Yankees from 1966 to 1974, the Cleveland Indians from 1974 to 1976, and the Texas Rangers in 1976. I have not lived in New Jersey since the early 1970's, and I know very little about politics. After my career ended, I worked for the Baseball Chapel, essentially serving as a team chaplain and helping players to remain close to their faith even during the grind of a busy season.

David and I have become very close over the past few years. We are currently collaborating on a book about my baseball experience during the season that I pitched in the All-Star game. He called me one day, at a particularly tough time for me, and said: "Fritz, you should write a book about the season you won 20 games and made the All-Star team." He offered to help me and the 300-page book will be published this fall. As part of the process, David and I have spent a considerable amount of time reminiscing about the Yankees 1970 team. The combination of David's research and my memories has developed into an interesting story about the one-time champion Yankees fighting the newcomer to baseball, the Mets, in one of the most competitive sports cities in the country.

I am a 75-year-old cancer survivor who has faced significant struggles since I left professional sports 40 years ago, and David has helped me to relive perhaps the greatest time of my life. More importantly, he is helping me financially by working with me on this book. I live predominately on my baseball pension and social security – both relatively meager amounts, since ballplayers like me did not make much money during the era that I played (not at all like it is today.) David is generously making it possible

for me to earn additional money that will allow me to support my extended family. He is dependable, hard-working, and has never asked me for anything. When I offered him some old baseball memorabilia as a token of my appreciation, he told me that it should remain in my family so that my grandchildren might enjoy it someday.

I can tell you that David has helped to change my life. It is hard to even express how it feels to go from being cheered by thousands of fans at Yankee Stadium to a life where few people remember who I used to be. He has made me feel relevant again. He has been a very loyal friend. David has never said no to any request I have made of him. We are in contact nearly every day and he has become an important part of my life. The things that I read about him on the internet do not accurately reflect the person whom I have come to know. I value his friendship very much. I know this might sound a little selfish, but I would most respectfully ask for leniency on his behalf because I very much need him in my life right now. I need his help to market my book once it is published in the fall, and I rely on his advice and his judgment. His absence would leave a void in my life.

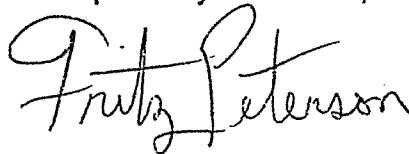
David and I share a common bond, for both of our careers have become defined by a single event rather than the entirety of our achievements. In 1973, news that I had fallen in love with the wife of my teammate and best friend became a national media sensation. For the few that do remember me, that is what I am remembered for – not for my accomplishments as an All-Star pitcher, but because I was involved in a scandal. For me, there are no regrets, because my wife and I have spent the last 44 years of our lives enjoying a wonderful life together. I am writing to you about this only to put into context what I have said to David: that life goes on, and that he has many, many years ahead of him to be a valuable member of his community. If what David has done for me and my family is any indication of his potential (which I believe it is), then I am certain that he will do tremendous good during the remainder of his life.

David is a very private person and does not display his emotions easily. It was at dinner in January that he finally opened up and discussed his feelings toward the bridge issue that has ruined his life. There is no doubt to me that David is deeply regretful of his actions. He has expressed much remorse for what he did and frustration with the foolishness of the bad decisions he made. His sincerity in those statements is clear. He expressed guilt for the innocent people who were wronged by his bad act. This has been a difficult time for David and his entire family. I have told him that all of us make mistakes and that he will have the opportunity to right his wrongs going forward. I have told him that we are all judged by the entirety of our lives and not on a single act.

p. 3

Judge Wigenton, I respectfully ask you to show mercy for my friend, David. He is a very, very good person and I am confident that the remainder of his life will be led with the utmost integrity. He has so much to offer in people. I pray that you will consider my request. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fritz Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "F".

Fritz Peterson

K

CHARLIE HAYES

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

May 25, 2017

Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
Judge of the United States District Court
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Re: David Wildstein

Dear Judge Wigenton:

My name is Charlie Hayes. I am 52 years old and reside in Tomball, Texas. I spent fourteen years as a major league baseball player, for the Giants, Phillies, Yankees, Rockies, Brewers and Astros. It was with the Yankees in 1996 that I received a World Series ring. I am currently employed as a minor league baseball coach. Two of my sons have followed in my footsteps as professional baseball players, and for that I am very, very proud.

I grew up in an underprivileged family from a poor town in rural Mississippi. My father died when I was young, we didn't have much money, and my prospects for my future were not good. I was fortunate enough to have been a good athlete, and sports became my ticket out the kind of life that a man like me would have otherwise experienced. At age 18, the Giants drafted me and sent me to play for their minor league team in Great Falls, Montana.

Ma'am, I tell you this story so that I can explain the nature of my relationship with David Wildstein. We have become friends over the last several years. He has been helpful to me and my family. I find him to be smart, kind and trustworthy.

Life has treated me well, and I feel strongly that I want to give something back to the community. I have begun the process of starting a non-profit foundation, the Charlie Hayes Big League Baseball Academy. I have asked David to run this foundation for me because I have complete confidence in his abilities, his leadership, and his integrity. He has agreed to volunteer his time and has already begun his work. Our skills are different and together we make a great team.

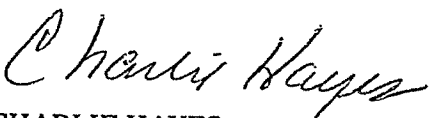
Page 2

The mission of my foundation is to provide young athletes with the opportunity to play baseball, regardless of their economic status. We will create programs to help young players strengthen family values, improve their self-esteem, build character and learn self-assurance. We will seek to provide stability to these young players during their adolescent years, teaching unselfish decision-making skills on and off the field. We never want to see anyone turned away from the baseball diamond. Our aim is to prevent delinquency and provide constructive training toward athletic principles that will allow every athlete to have an opportunity to reach his or her potential. Our support programs help athletes who may be homeless, where we offer an environment to allow them to think and seek the help that is needed to excel.

Ma'am, I am aware of the legal issues that David faces. While I surely do not condone his behavior, David has impressed me as a person who regrets a terrible decision and is worthy of a second chance. If you are willing to sentence David to a term of community service, I would be glad to have David complete all or part that service in the launching of my foundation. Every day, I hear stories of young athletes who fail to reach their potential in life because they lacked the financial means to pursue their dreams. What I am proposing could be an important step in extending the opportunities of sports to young men and women in need, and hope that you will permit David to spend his time helping me to create and operate a meaningful vehicle for youth whose circumstances might otherwise put them into a troublesome path.

Thank you, Ma'am, for listening to me.

Very truly yours,


CHARLIE HAYES

L

May 22, 2017

The Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

Even though I am intensely interested in New Jersey and covered the events personally, I cannot pretend to know all the facts behind the scandal that has become universally known as "Bridgegate." But I do know David Wildstein. And David Wildstein is one of the most principled men I know.

One of those principles is loyalty. I've seen astounding acts of fealty from David over the years and I fully believe that his role in Bridgegate, while stupid and wrong, came from a place of loyalty. I think he thought he was advancing an agenda he believed in on behalf of a politician he believed in.

David Wildstein made some bad decisions. He's taken responsibility for his actions in a way that no one else associated with this regrettable episode has. He has helped bring justice to bear and I personally watched David agonizingly atone for his misdeeds by testifying, truthfully and fully deploying his trademark ridiculously great memory, against those accused of crimes in this case. That ought to be worth something as he faces the music for his misdeeds.

I write to you with the hope that David's sentence be considered alongside the unique value his cooperation provided.

Sincerely,

Ken Kurson, Editor in Chief

OBSERVER

Observer reaches over 6M influencers every month.

M

Mary L. Osborne, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
May 30, 2017

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Your Honor,

By way of introduction, my name is Mary Osborne. I am a Licensed Psychologist in the state of New Jersey. I graduated from Douglass College, Rutgers University with a BA in psychology, Tufts University with an MA in Applied Child Development and Florida State University with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. I completed an internship at the Judge Baker Children's Hospital with an appointment at Harvard Medical School and a fellowship at Children's Seashore House, the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Prior to entering private practice, I held faculty positions in the Department of Pediatrics at both the University of Pennsylvania and Robert Wood Johnson Medical Schools.

I am writing on behalf of my good friend, David Wildstein. I respect how valuable your time is so I am going to try to succinctly describe the man I have had the pleasure of friendship for the last 22 years. David and his family, are like family to mine. I feel I have a unique perspective as David's longtime friend to share aspects of his character with you. Although the current situation before you involving David may raise questions about his character, I ask you to consider the David I know in your sentencing. My characterization of David reflects the history of a good man, a family man and one who truly cares about others.

David is a caring, compassionate, generous and loyal friend. I want to share a couple of examples to support my portrayal of David. The Blizzard of January 1996, wrecked havoc in New Jersey. My husband, a physician, had to stay at the hospital for 3 days. I was left home with our 3 year old, and four month old daughters. When David heard that we were home alone, he weathered the harsh elements and drove to pick us up and bring us back to his home. A home cooked

meal with friends warmed our hearts and allayed our fears. This is just one simple example of David's kindness and caring.

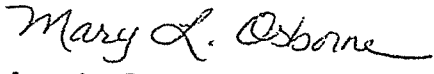
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

More recently, I have tried to support David and his family. Although David has never discussed the specifics of this case with me, we have discussed his emotional state and psychological distress. David is contrite, self-reflective, takes personal responsibility for his actions and is distraught by the stress his actions have caused others. David is also deeply saddened by the loss of friendships. Your Honor, David is genuinely remorseful. The David that I know on a personal level is not the David that was beguiled by New Jersey politicians.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a little about my dear friend David. I respectfully ask that your sentencing decision take into account the many positive contributions David has made, and urge your leniency in this matter.

Sincerely,


Mary L. Osborne, Ph.D.

N

Shirley-Mae Smith

June 11, 2017

The Honorable Susan Davis Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Re: David Wildstein

Dear Judge Wigenton:

Last week I had the very pleasant surprise of receiving a telephone call from David Wildstein asking if I would be willing to write a letter on his behalf attesting to his good character during the period in which we had been very close friends—1984 through approximately 1994. I and my family had moved from San Francisco, California to Livingston in 1978. I had been born and raised most of my life prior to moving to San Francisco in Los Angeles, California. My husband and our son, Michael, were also big city dwellers. Because I was working for the then A.T. & T. headquartered in New York City and Basking Ridge, transferees were encouraged to relocate in areas convenient to both locations. And when my husband, Dr. Harvey L. Roter, a practicing podiatrist, was shown a home/office for sale directly across from Mt. Pleasant Grammar School and Mt. Pleasant Jr. High School, we jumped at buying this house, feeling it was meant to be.

It was quite an adjustment for all of us to get used to living in small town America. One of my most memorable experiences was attending a Welcome Wagon meeting in which the other women couldn't get over the fact that my last name was different from that of my husband's and son's. I wanted to get back to the reality I knew in San Francisco. However, we did get used to small town living, especially after our home suffered severe fire damage and absolute strangers wanted to give us their clothes, or

have us move in with them for however long we would need. This kind of generosity overwhelmed us and made both my husband and me to give back to this town.

I decided to join the town's Health Advisory Committee and I became very involved ensuring that the school system and the town would be prepared to welcome the first students and residents with exposure to Aids. This of course was very controversial at that time and led to lots of discussions. One of my fellow committee members introduced me to David Wildstein, because apparently the Republican party was looking for some new blood to become active in the town's politics.

Our friendship began from this. He was this young kid—22 years old! We share the same birthdate, September 21st. twenty years apart. In fact, Bob Franks who was our Assemblyman and one of David's very best friends was also born on September 21st ten years between David and me. I was so taken by this kid who loved politics and Livingston. Apparently, he had been the youngest person to try to run for town council at 15 or 18 years of age and when he was finally allowed to run, he was the youngest councilman to ever serve in Livingston. All I can really relate about David at this point is that he was obsessed with politics, Livingston, and his family. But he was a good kid and sometimes a little immature to me, he was friendly with all the Livingston police, fire fighters, teachers and kids a few years younger than him. He knew their issues, their concerns, and their problems and was always thinking of ways to solve them that would be acceptable to both sides—and there were always two sides.

David worked on me for the next couple of months until he got me to change parties and agree to run for Council. And have no doubt, David was our mentor. He was the Campaign Advisor for the 3 candidates he recruited to run as a team, and he really did everything. He ran our campaign like a professional. Yet he was so young! Everything was on time and very effective. The one thing that I was most pleased to be relieved of was writing all the political position papers and newspaper articles. David already knew all our local, state and federal office holders and arranged for them to all meet us at the Livingston Town Hall for pictures of their endorsing us. These pictures were used throughout the campaign. He even arranged for Bob Franks, one of our town's most respected and popular state assembly member to go door-to-door campaigning with me. It was a really a great time for me and my family. Unfortunately, I lost by a very few votes, and was soon appointed to the township's Planning Board for 4 years.

It is this period in David's life that I really want to focus upon. During the campaign David was a true Pied Piper. He always had a few teenagers following him trying to be his friend. After all, he was only a couple of years older than they and he was their councilman who got things done. David wanted the kids to learn that they could influence their own lives by actively working to make differences in their school and town. He started a special committee on our campaign for school kids to participate in the weekly meetings and undertake some of the campaign jobs, he became the Kiwanis sponsor of the Kiwanis' youth group located at the high school, the Key Club, he helped some interested kids get

summer clerkships working in the Senate and House of Representatives in Washington D.C., and he worked hard while on the township council to create a new committee charged with planning activities for the kids positive activities to do to keep them busy and out of trouble. They started their Project Graduation, an alternative drug-free all-night event that is still held every year and for which they have multiple fund-raising actives throughout the year such as an auto rally, and an intergenerational prom. But the two most important things that David accomplished for the youth were the creation of the Monmouth Youth Center and the position of non-voting member on the township council for a high school senior. What experiences.

But that is not all. David cared about all people—all ages. He helped push through the development of the first Senior Citizens Housing Complex located in Livingston. At a Council Meeting, Mayor David Wildstein lectured an angry crowd that had come out to oppose the creation of a home for disabled young people. He asked, where were their consciences? This was the real David who cared for the youth, the elderly, the disabled.

David made so many positive changes during his public career in Livingston. However, equally important to me is to remember David for the joy he felt when he could improve the lives of others. I remember the pleasure he got when the servers at the Ritz Diner could enjoy a normal Christmas dinner with their families because David had organized three shifts of volunteers to cover for them. I and I remember how important it was to David that he be sworn in as Mayor of Livingston while his one remaining grandfather was still alive and able to swear him in.

[REDACTED]

I don't know who the David Wildstein mentioned in the newspaper reports about "Bridgegate" is. It is certainly not the David Wildstein I knew and loved as a favorite friend who brought so many good people into our lives, who would do anything within his means to makes life better for others, and who loved to laugh along with everyone else. I always said that the David I knew was a good person. It must have been his success at such a young age that turned his head. David was impatient for change and he did not tolerate fools or procrastinator well. If you had a task on a project that David had interest in, you had better put your nose to the grind stone and do you job. And as I prepare to take my first ride on the soon to be completed Bayonne Bridge replacement which David championed for, I say thank you David. You really did achieve some important positive changes during your tenure at the Port Authority.

Please Judge Wigenton, I know David really regrets his immature pomposity of these last few years and has plans to continue his work on developing his real purpose for the remainder of his life. Please remember this real David when considering his sentence.


Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley-Mae Smith". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Shirley" and last name "Smith" clearly legible.

Shirley-Mae Smith



Jeanne Joyce Silberman



The Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101

May 26, 2017

Your Honor,

Please accept this letter as a character reference for my friend and mentor David Wildstein.

I have known David for over thirty years. It is with fondness that I write this letter on Memorial Day Weekend because every year that I was in high school I spent with David building a float for our town parade. That is how I remember David. David was the youngest ever-elected public official to our Township Counsel and inspiration to many my age in our town. David spent thousands of hours (and I do not exaggerate) mentoring students, like myself, and classmates of mine, and set a great example. The Memorial Day float that we built each year was for the Kiwanis and Key Club, both service organizations in our town that David was actively involved. Through these organizations, I learned the importance of volunteerism and work ethic, two important lessons I carry with me today.

I was lucky to have met David at age 14. David never treated me like a kid. He introduced me to experiences to which I would never have otherwise been exposed. David organized trips to Washington, DC for high school students. We visited the White House, met diplomats and volunteered at homeless shelters. I remember David introducing me to a homeless man named Stacey Abner, whom he had known from his college years in Washington, who lived for years under the steps of the Capital. David would instill in us that although we may come from privilege, we should not be spoiled but instead use our privilege to help others. I traveled to leadership conferences throughout the United States all because of David. I learned to be a confident, driven woman because of him. David wanted to mentor us and expose us to real issues. He invested in us, in me.

I remember high school fondly. I was an active student – always trying to be a doer. David pushed me to be a better person and do more for the community and to understand the importance of civic involvement. Sometimes it was tough love. I remember being woken up by the phone ringing at 7 am on a Sunday when I was a senior in high school. I wanted to sleep in, but we had a coat drive going on and David had arranged for trucks to pick them up at 7:30 and someone needed to be there. I went. When David ran for reelection some of the theater kids put on production of “Pippin” to raise money for his candidacy. Although he ran as a Republican and most of the kids participating leaned left, we didn’t hesitate at all to organize a fundraiser to help the man who always had our back and was an inspiration to us. Politics aside it was the candidate we supported.

David has always been an advocate for youth and was instrumental in bringing a Youth Appreciation Week to our Town. It is still celebrated today, although I doubt many remember (or will admit) that it was David’s idea!

David always wanted us to dream big. When we wanted to have a fundraiser for the Make A Wish foundation he helped us secure the Cody Arena. We raised \$25,000. Not bad for a group of high school students.

Following high school, David was instrumental in getting me an internship at Congressman Bob Franks Office in the 7th Congressional District of New Jersey. I worked for Bob for two years in college and all through law school. David opened that door for me and would always check in on how I was doing and what I was learning. He encouraged me to continue to be involved.

Since graduating law school, David and I have remained friends. I know his wife and three amazing children. David is a loyal family person who mentors his own children like he did me. We have been lucky enough to share in wonderful celebrations together like my wedding and his children’s Bar Mitzvahs. David has met my three children and I have shared with them about my childhood mentor and friend.

As a mom of three children growing up in the town where I was raised and shared so many invaluable experiences with David Wildstein, it was hard for me to explain how my mentor could plead guilty to such an act. I explained to them that David continues to be a good man who made a mistake (as we all will in our lives). He did the right thing by taking full responsibility and acknowledging that he broke the law. It does not change my opinion of David or my firm belief that he has done far more good in this world than bad.

I know David well. I have never known him to be the calculating, manipulative mastermind that has played out in the news over the last two years. Yes he was obsessed with politics and yes he would serve his boss, maybe at all costs. I believe he got caught up into something that was bigger than him. In my life David has only been a mentor, a teacher. David has helped New Jersey and I believe the State would not benefit from sentencing him to any prison time. David understands his mistakes, has

owned them and has already paid for them greatly. I believe it is time to put "Bridgegate" behind us and David should be allowed to resume his life.

Thank you for reading this letter in support of my friend.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Joyce Silberman

P

David J. Issenman
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Court, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building & U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street, Room 4015
Newark, NJ 07101

June 5, 2017

Dear Judge Wigenton,

I write to you on behalf of David Wildstein in the hope that you will favorably consider imposing a non-custodial sentence upon him.

I do not make this recommendation lightly; but I believe that in the weighing of all the appropriate factors, the mitigating ones substantially outweigh the aggravating ones, and a non-custodial sentence is appropriate.

I knew David from politics for a long time before I became a Judge over 25 years ago. He is not a bad person; but he did a bad thing. In my discussions with David, he takes full responsibility and acknowledges his absolute guilt – and stupidity. He is remorseful and contrite. Indeed, he is not only sorry for the act itself, but also for all the harm his actions have unleashed upon so many people.

David did not benefit or intend to benefit financially or personally from closing the George Washington Bridge. It was intended as a political statement, a political prank, to enhance the goals of someone else - ill-conceived, childish, wrong, and criminal. David understands that, and he will live with that shame for the rest of his life.

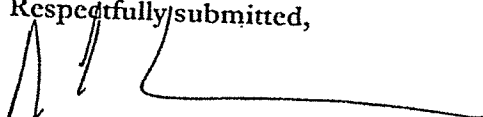
How to explain such actions from an intelligent person? I speculate that power, or the illusion thereof, distorts reality. Just imagine the heady feeling of being a very important person working for a Governor, who could perhaps be the next President of the United States. The thrill is intoxicating. It distorts reality – it compels people to do things they ought not to do. But they do anyway!

David, like Icarus, flew too close to the sun. He must now be punished.

David has acknowledged his guilt, co-operated and is remorseful. He is humbler and wiser and I most respectfully do not believe that incarceration would be appropriate for David. It serves no useful purpose in this case.

I ask that you sentence him with mercy, so that he may have the chance to redeem himself.

Respectfully submitted,


David J. Issenman, J.S.C. (ret.)



Marianne Ignar
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

May 31, 2017

The Honorable Susan S. Wigenton
United States District Judge
District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, NJ 07101

Re: David Wildstein

Dear Judge Wigenton:

I am writing a character reference letter to tell you about the David Wildstein I knew and respected during my employment at Apache Mills. David and I worked together at the firm's Fairfield New Jersey office for 19 years. I sat no further than 25 feet from David's office the entire 19 years. They have since closed the New Jersey office and I am currently employed in Totowa, NJ.

David was a quiet person and for the most part kept to himself, at the same time he was very congenial and helpful to the office staff both in the New Jersey office and the Calhoun, GA office and from what I witnessed, he had a good relationship with the sales reps and house accounts that David managed as Vice President of Sales. David even formed outside of work relationships with some of our sales rep and customers. One customer called the office often and one time he and I had a conversation about the minor league baseball games that he and David would take their sons to and that he often asked David and his family to visit them.

Speaking of the baseball games, David was a terrific father in my eyes. I often admired David for the thought and effort he put into raising his children, for example, he would make plans with each child individually - go to a baseball game with one, take another to a movie etc. - whatever the kids wanted to do. He thought this was good for father and son/daughter bonding. I thought it was cute. Outside of my impressions of him as a good account manager and a terrific father, he was also committed to his parents and brothers and sister. From what I observed David was the go to person for the family. He was the level headed, good communicator and peace keeper. Every family has one and I believe it was David in his family.

Not only was David the go to person in his family, he was the go to person in our office. He was the person who prodded his father and uncle to get us updated computers and other technical equipment in the office. He was the person who taught us to navigate the computer before it was commonplace. He was the one who stayed late on Christmas Eve when we had computer issues at the Georgia office.

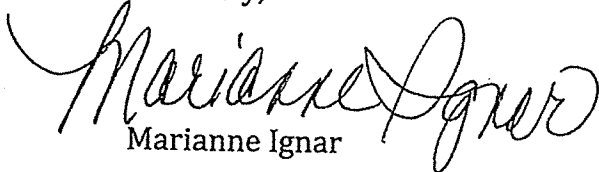
David was the person who introduced us to Krispy Cream donuts and later found the best bagel shop for everything bagels. He very often stopped on his way to work to pick these delights up for us. David was the person who quickly jumped up to put out the fire in microwave. David was the person who dropped the phone and ran out into our quickly flooding parking lot and moved the girls' cars up a grassy hill to save them from flooding.

More personally, David has been a thoughtful and caring friend to me over the years. A couple of examples come to mind. I once had a personal issue that required my leaving work early for a meeting. David also left work early and stayed with me offering support and guidance even though my meeting ran past regular office hours before it was resolved. Another example is one Christmas when my nephew was around 12, I was looking for ideas as to what I could to get him. I had told the girls and David the only thing I knew he was that he was interested in was political science. What do you give a child interested in political science? David suggested I give him presidential buttons. David is a collector and offered to give me some buttons he had duplicates of. He advised me what kind of frame to buy and where to buy it, and he also suggested how to position the buttons. My nephew was thrilled!

In conclusion, I hope I have met my goal to show you a small glimpse of the patient, level-headed, good listener, good communicator, giving, helpful, caring and loyal friend I have known for so many years. Even in light of recent events for which I am writing this letter, my opinion of my trusted friend and coworker has not waived.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,


Marianne Ignar

R

STEVE ISSENMAN



May 31, 2017

The Honorable Susan David Wigenton
United States District Judge, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building & U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street, Room 4015
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

I write to you to kindly, respectfully, and sincerely ask for your leniency while considering the sentence of my dear friend, David Wildstein.

Although this entire episode generated significant media coverage about David, most of it was unfavorable and failed to accurately portray the David who I've known for 35 years.

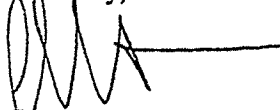
David is a wonderful, brilliant, giving, funny and kind man. He is deeply passionate. He is an amazing father and incredibly dedicated to his family. He is one of the most generous people I know. He has been a tremendous friend to me and an amazing mentor to countless other young men and women as they started their careers. He has always given freely and tirelessly of his time, counsel, labor, and friendship. The kindness, compassion, support and empathy that David showed to me and to so many others over the years was unfortunately never captured or showcased during the trial's coverage, but at his core, David is truly a good person.

I can frankly share with you that, as difficult as this entire ordeal has been for so many people, I know it has caused David a considerable amount of deep introspection and self-examination. He has expressed genuine remorse and taken responsibility. He has viewed this as a personal growth opportunity, one that has been humbling but valuable and meaningful. He has learned and evolved as a person.

Having known David for most of my life, and having personally witnessed his sincere remorse and personal growth throughout this process, I know he has learned valuable lessons that he will apply throughout the rest of his life. Although there was no opportunity for the above sentiments to be conveyed during the trial, I hope this helps to show a side of David that deserves to be taken into account.

Thank you for any consideration you might afford my friend David during this difficult process.

Sincerely,



Steve Issenman

5

YANKEES' CANO BRINGS POTENT MIX OF POWER, QUICK HANDS TO THE PLATE. KLAPISCH, S-1

\$1.50
SUNDAY
March 4, 2012

The Record

TODAY 48°/28°
Breezy and cooler with some sun
TOMORROW 41°/23°
Mostly cloudy and breezy

Bomb suspect called hateful

Students say he blasted religion, government

By JEAN RIMBACH
STAFF WRITER

He didn't believe in God and hated American government.
He spoke ill of religions and put down classmates.
And he could, at times, be hostile.
That's how some who knew Aakash Dalal — arrested Friday for his alleged role

in the firebombing of two Bergen County synagogues — remember him from Lodi High School.
Some members of the tennis team, where Dalal played singles, described him Saturday as a loner, a smart but socially awkward person who could lash out at any time — at them, at organized religion, at government.
"I think a majority of the people that

were on the team, that went to school with him, would probably say it's not surprising," said Hammad Farooq, 18, one of Dalal's teammates. "He basically just used to say bad stuff about every religion, about the government, how everything's run."
"I'm from Pakistan, and a couple of friends that were from India, we basically all got targeted on the tennis team because of our religion and beliefs. And he

did threaten a couple of us — 'I'm going to bomb you' this and that — but we just took it as a joke."

Teammate Harkamal Singh said Dalal could "be threatening and would overreact to joking around about losing a game or cutting in front of him during practice."
"He actually told me once — it was a

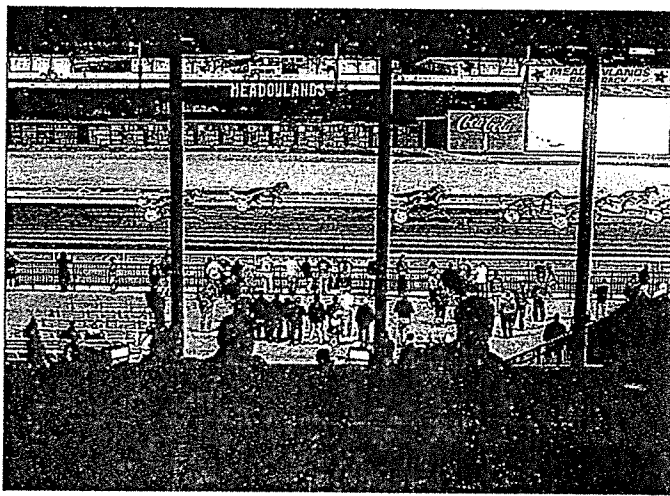


DALAL

joke hopefully — that I'm going to bring a knife tomorrow and I'm going to stab you," said Singh.
But his slight stature made Dalal easy to dismiss: "The way he looked at you when he said stuff, if he wasn't a little scrawny kid it would have been more intimidating," Farooq said.
"He always had a weird way — just a weird personality," said Kyle Boris, 19. "He would always, like, put down other kids. I guess he thought he was better than

See SUSPECT Page A-8

IS THE RACETRACK MAKING A COMEBACK?



Fans following the action from the grandstand at the Meadowlands. The track has been under private operation for two months, as the state tries to get out of the racing business. Story, L-1

Christie's man has key role at Port Authority

Ex-blogger is 'watcher' at agency

By SHAWN BOBURG
STAFF WRITER

For a decade, he was a faceless force in New Jersey politics, an Internet blogger who delivered scoops while keeping his identity a closely guarded secret.

Now, David Wildstein, formerly known by the pen name Wally Edge, is playing a key behind-the-scenes role in Governor Christie's effort to get more control over the Port Authority, the bi-state transportation agency that has come under increased scrutiny since raising bridge and tunnel tolls in September.

The Port Authority, criticized as wasteful and dysfunctional, is the largest and most complex agency yet to be singled out by Christie as



David Wildstein, left, and Governor Christie are pictured in their Livingston high school yearbooks.
being in need of reform. And in Wildstein, an experienced political strategist who went to high school with the governor, the Christie administration may have found the perfect instrument to help shake things up, some say.

See WILDSTEIN Page A-8

No assurances of NYPD probe

Muslim leaders meet with AG

By HANNAH ADELY
STAFF WRITER

TRENTON — Muslim leaders in New Jersey got no assurances that the state attorney general would launch an investigation into NYPD surveillance in their communities at a meeting Saturday in the state capital.

The top law-enforcement officials in New Jersey met with Muslim leaders in Trenton to address concerns about revelations detailing surveillance of mosques, businesses and worshippers by members of the New

York Police Department.

But even with no promise to investigate, Muslim leaders said the officials — representing both federal and state agencies — showed they were committed to tackling violations of civil rights and justice.

"The key point is to go back to the community and let them know that New Jersey law enforcement is taking this issue seriously and listening to us, and they do have the interest in continuing the partnership with our community," said Nadia Kahl, chair-

See MUSLIMS Page A-8

Lin passed over from start

By STEVE POPPER
STAFF WRITER

There are two things a general manager, a scout and a player personnel director want to be, and that's to be right. And in a quiet moment, they'll admit they want to be safe.

So they search, whether it's basketball or baseball or any sport. And to be safe, the easiest thing is to find someone who compares to someone who has been successful before. It's no different in basketball. And that's one of the things

Knick didn't have. 'look' of NBA guard

that made it so hard to predict the future for Jeremy Lin.

There was no comparison. Long before Lin's story took hold — a burst of hype that has made his Knicks No. 17 the hottest selling jersey in the NBA while rousing fans and media from the around the world — and suddenly there was a player who didn't compare to another player.

There was no 6-foot-3 Asian-

American point guard out of Harvard who had burst onto the scene before. There were no Asian-American point guards at all, and a Harvard grad hadn't made it on to a roster in more than 50 years.

So they passed. Every team skipped him in the first round of the draft two years ago. They all passed him by again in the second round. He hooked on with the Dallas Mavericks' summer league squad, got spotted and was signed by the Golden State Warriors. At-

See LIN Page A-5



FILE PHOTO
Jeremy Lin, seen here in high school, was often overlooked.

INSIDE

BERGEN EDITION

Iran the top topic at U.S.-Israel talk

The Palestinians probably will not get much more than a passing reference by the U.S. and Israeli officials, lawmakers, GOP presidential hopefuls and others at the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual policy conference, where President Obama is scheduled to speak today.

Iran is now the issue commanding urgent attention.

— Complete story on A-9

Death toll rises as tornado cleanup begins



As tornado cleanup commenced in earnest Saturday across the nation's midsection, the death toll from the most recent spate of severe weather rose to 38 across five states.

Friday's tornadoes were blamed for the deaths of 14 people in Indiana, and three in Kentucky. Authorities on Saturday also confirmed one weather-related death in northern Alabama and another in southern Georgia, where fierce storms caused widespread damage.

— Complete story on A-4

BP to settle suit for \$7.8 billion

Global oil giant BP has reached a proposed settlement with the more than 120,000 plaintiffs in the massive civil lawsuit arising from the 2010 Gulf of Mexico spill that the company estimates will set it back \$7.8 billion.

As part of the settlement announced Friday night, BP will pay people and businesses for their economic losses and medical claims.

— Complete story on A-4

Cameras closer than they appear?

Last year, a man killed his wife while backing up near his Clifton home and an 11-year-old girl was pinned under a car in the parking lot of her Nutley school. In 2010, four teens were hurt when a woman tried to back into a Tenafly parking space.

But mandating rearview cameras on all new cars — a feature designed to save 100 lives a year — would cost \$2.7 billion, some say.

— Road Warrior column, L-1



Please recycle
At least 25% recycled newspaper,
100% recyclable,
0% deforestation.

Call for home delivery: (800) 4 RECYCLE (888) 473-2673
©2012 NORTH JERSEY MEDIA GROUP INC.

Advice	F-8	Editorials	D-2	Obituaries	L-4	Shortcuts	C-2
Better Living	F-1	Horoscopes	F-9	People	A-2	Traffic	T-1
Bridge	F-9	Local News	D-1	Public notices	O-4	Weather	A-2
Business	B-1	MarketPlace	C-1	Sports	S-1		
Crosswords	F-9, J-7	Movies	F-7	Real Estate	R-1		



When it comes to heart disease, gender matters. Holy Name Medical Center

We provide gender-specific care that leads to the best outcome. • 1-877-HOLY-NAME (1-877-465-9626) • holyname.org/heart

A-8 THE RECORD

FROM PAGE ONE

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2012

Suspect: Known as a loner Wildstein: A force in the PA

From Page A-1

other kids, but I would never think he would do something of this magnitude."

Teammates said Dalal kept to himself, didn't help younger, less experienced players or stay after practice to socialize.

"He didn't try to be like a team player," said Boris. "He was a singles player, so he pretty much worried about himself. He didn't try to help out other people."

Dalal once won second-team all-league honors, according to The Record's archives.

Attempts at conversation were difficult. Singh said it was known Dalal got a high score on his SAT. But when he asked Dalal about it, he said "just think of it as something you'll never get."

Farooq said Dalal thought all Muslims were terrorists and said "there's no such thing as God." Singh noted he "hated American government" too.

"He's from India and I'm from India too. I would always like be-

OK, why don't you move back. And he would be like, 'I hate it there, too,'" said Singh.

Bergen County Prosecutor John Moynelli has described Dalal as an "insulator" of the incidents. He allegedly directed accomplice Anthony Graziano on where to find information online about building Molotov cocktails.

Dalal, 19, a onetime Rutgers University student, is accused of helping to plan attacks carried out by Graziano at Congregation Beth El in Rutherford on Jan. 11, and a Jan. 3 arson at the Congregation K'hal Adath Jeshurun in Paramus.

He is also accused of spray-painting anti-Semitic and white-supremacist graffiti at The Reconstructionist Temple Beth Israel in Maywood and Temple Beth El in Hackensack in December with Graziano.

"Whenever he would say something, it would either be about people's religion or the government or something," said Farooq.

"He just didn't have anything nice to say to anybody."

It could sometimes be hard to tell if Dalal was serious. Singh recalled him saying he was going to "be a farmer and live away from everybody."

Another former classmate and fellow tennis player, who asked him he had dropped out of Rutgers to go to Columbia, and later claimed to be working for a big company and making millions of dollars.

"Sometimes he tells the truth, sometimes he doesn't," said the teammate. Dalal, he said, "had problems — no normal person would talk about government all the time." The classmate thought, perhaps, some of the things Dalal said were poor attempts to impress or make friends.

"He was just a very awkward person to be around to be honest," said Farooq. "He didn't know how to talk to people. When you talked to him you got a bad vibe."

From Page A-1

Longtime employees, however, privately describe a man intent on carrying out a political agenda rather than one he set on reform or improving the region's transportation system. They believe the appointment of Wildstein and dozens of others recommended by the governor for jobs ranging from toll collector to deputy executive director — are evidence that political loyalty trumps merit.

To Christie, though, they are meant to bring about change. And Wildstein figures prominently in that effort.

"He is there in that job because he is well suited to the task of playing a role in reforming the Port Authority in accordance with the governor's goals," said Christie's spokesman, Michael Drewniak.

Once an ambitious and brash young local politician, Wildstein now stays in the shadows, seldom attending the agency's public events or appearing in the news.

He did the same while building an Internet site, PolitickerNJ.com, which grabbed the attention of Trenton insiders and the traditional media. Wildstein launched the site while holding a day job — running his family's floor mat manufacturing business. The Christie administration exposed Wildstein's true identity when it tapped him for the newly created position of interstate capital projects director in May 2010.

At a recent public meeting of the agency's commissioners in Manhattan, he stood at the back of the conference room, next to the back door and behind rows of agency executives. When a reporter asked him about his job, past experience and relationship to the governor, he smiled and referred each question to the media relations office. Why, he was asked, would he not talk about his role at the agency?

"Because I don't do anything publicly," he said.

A key figure

But inside the agency's headquarters, Wildstein plays a central role in decisions that affect the public.

He keeps a close watch on the agency's \$1 billion project to raise the Bayonne Bridge, a big priority for the governor, and construction of a new GoGo Bridge, a top of official familiar with his work said. Wildstein helped carry out the decision to strip most Port Authority employees and retirees of free E-ZPass privileges after Christie criticized the perk.

He was also one of a handful of executives who planned the proposal for toll hikes in August and the subsequent public hearings. Several sources said. At part of what sources said was a coordinated plan, union workers flooded the hearings to speak in favor of the toll hikes. The hearings were held on one day during rush hour and at hard-to-find venues, making it difficult for many commuters to attend. At the time, Christie said he was surprised by the size of the toll hike proposal and later agreed to a smaller increase.

Several executives said Wildstein has played a role in placing some of those recommended by the Christie administration in jobs and that the scene is set as the administration's eyes and ears within the byzantine agency.

The Montville resident arrives at the agency's Manhattan headquarters before almost anyone, often at 6:30 a.m., several said. He walks the halls noting the comings and goings of other executives, some said. And he often attends high-level meetings in the place of Deputy Executive Director Bill Baroni, quietly tapping notes on his electronic tablet.

Eight current and past Port Authority colleagues agreed to speak about Wildstein, but insisted that their identities remain undisclosed because they feared retribution. They described Wildstein, one of 50 recommended for jobs by the Christie administration, as intimidating, hardworking, intelligent, private and fiercely loyal to the governor.

Some bristle that a senior executive post is occupied by someone with more experience with campaigns than with transportation issues.

"He became the watcher of the entire agency," one person said. "What he was watching for was strict adherence to the Christie agenda."

Wildstein hasn't won many friends among longtime agency executives, but that's just fine with Christie.

If he's not liked for that role, and if he's accused of being zealous in that regard, then we pleased him," Drewniak said.

The Port Authority was created



David Wildstein, appointed by Governor Christie as director of Interstate Capital Projects at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, appearing at a meeting Feb. 9.

mayor. Around the same time, he began working as a deputy clerk in the state Assembly.

His tenure in Livingston was marked by rancor, attributed by some to his aggressive and combative brand of party politics, learned in his work with Republicans on the state and federal levels.

Wildstein worked as a chief of staff to Assembly Minority Leader Chuck Hardwick, a legislative aide to state Sen. Louis Bassano and a staff assistant to U.S. Rep. Christopher Smith. He also later became an outside adviser to U.S. Rep. Bob Franks.

Locally, he alienated some in his own party.

"It was a tumultuous time," said Wildstein's cousin, running mate Thomas L. Adams. "He was just a kid, a very ambitious kid."

Livingston's former Democratic Mayor Robert Leopold called Wildstein "a political animal" whose management style became overbearing. As mayor, Wildstein walked the halls of Town Hall observing employees, Leopold said.

"He frightened people," said the longtime member of Essex County Democratic Committee. "He was a very contentious person."

He was also very outspoken. He trumpeted his opposition to low-income housing in Livingston. He said county government was wasting money. And he criticized a judge for not imposing bail on two Brooklyn men arrested on shoplifting charges at the local mall and offered a \$250 reward for information that led to their conviction. That drove Todd Christie, the governor's brother and a Livingston resident at the time, to offer Wildstein some advice in a letter to the local paper: "Save your political theater for the campaign trail."

At the end of his stint in local office, Wildstein withdrew from a reelection bid after a poor showing in a primary, saying he wanted to work full-time in his family's textile business. In his farewell speech, he vowed to stay out of local politics.

Boy politician

Wildstein got an early start in politics in his hometown of Livingston.

A change of allegiance led to one of his first appearances in the headlines. The local weekly newspaper matter of factly reported in a 120-word article that Wildstein had resigned from a group supporting one congressional candidate in favor of his opponent, Thomas H. Keen Sr., then a state legislator who lived down the block from Wildstein. A small photo made clear what the article did not: Wildstein was a 12-year-old.

At 16, he unsuccessfully sued to get on the ballot for the county Republican Committee. A year later, while he was still in high school, Wildstein ran for the local school board, even though he was not old enough by law to occupy the seat. He generated 37 votes — and a minor controversy.

His high school social studies teacher publicly accused Wildstein of duping him into signing an endorsement letter that later appeared in the local newspaper. The pair later issued a joint statement calling it "basically a misunderstanding."

Although Wildstein and Christie attended the same high school, they seemed to be of different molds. Christie, a year younger, was a perennial class president and baseball player who in 1980 about high school sweethearts and going to concerts. There are no remembrances, school clubs or sports teams next to Wildstein's 1979 senior picture.

The space is blank. The bespectacled teenager was focused on a bigger popularity contest than the one playing out in Livingston's high school.

Called 'contentious'

Four years later, after working on a presidential campaign and as a political consultant while in college in Washington, D.C., Wildstein returned to Livingston. At 23, he won a four-year term on the town council, including two as

KEVIN R. WEDLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

mayor. Around the same time, he began working as a deputy clerk in the state Assembly.

His tenure in Livingston was marked by rancor, attributed by some to his aggressive and combative brand of party politics, learned in his work with Republicans on the state and federal levels.

Wildstein worked as a chief of staff to Assembly Minority Leader Chuck Hardwick, a legislative aide to state Sen. Louis Bassano and a staff assistant to U.S. Rep. Christopher Smith. He also later became an outside adviser to U.S. Rep. Bob Franks.

Locally, he alienated some in his own party.

"It was a tumultuous time," said Wildstein's cousin, running mate Thomas L. Adams. "He was just a kid, a very ambitious kid."

Livingston's former Democratic Mayor Robert Leopold called Wildstein "a political animal" whose management style became overbearing. As mayor, Wildstein walked the halls of Town Hall observing employees, Leopold said.

"He frightened people," said the longtime member of Essex County Democratic Committee. "He was a very contentious person."

He was also very outspoken. He trumpeted his opposition to low-income housing in Livingston. He said county government was wasting money. And he criticized a judge for not imposing bail on two Brooklyn men arrested on shoplifting charges at the local mall and offered a \$250 reward for information that led to their conviction. That drove Todd Christie, the governor's brother and a Livingston resident at the time, to offer Wildstein some advice in a letter to the local paper: "Save your political theater for the campaign trail."

At the end of his stint in local office, Wildstein withdrew from a reelection bid after a poor showing in a primary, saying he wanted to work full-time in his family's textile business. In his farewell speech, he vowed to stay out of local politics.

Creates website

Wildstein was a top executive at his family's Georgia-based textile manufacturing business, Apache Mills, one the country's largest floor mat manufacturers, from the late 1980s until 2007.

But he also maintained connections to the Republican establishment, advising candidates and elected officials like Franks and created the website in February 2000. It was "a place for political junkies," he wrote. His adopted pen name was a nod to Walter Edge, a former New Jersey governor who was instrumental in the Port Authority's creation in 1921.

Relying on anonymous tips from political operatives and officials, Wildstein published bite-size news breaks involving campaign strategies, horse trading and power plays, along with opinions and rumors. As the site became a must-read among the political class, speculation intensified about the author's identity and political affiliation.

He hired editors and reporters who also reportedly were not told of Wildstein's identity and communicated with him only through email. He sold the site in 2007 to Observer Media Group for an undisclosed amount but remained as a vice president and columnist. He retired Vally Edge in 2010, when he took on the Port Authority job.

In his last post, he wrote that retaining his anonymity "was a rather amazing feat in a state where few secrets remain behind closed doors."

He also quoted that great political strategist Machiavelli: "Whoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times."

Staff Writer John Resteyre contributed to this article. Email: boburn@northjersey.com



From left, Muslim leaders Mohamed Younes, Mohamed El Filali and Imnam Mohammed Oatani arriving in Trenton.

Muslims: No probe promised

From Page A-1

woman of the New Jersey chapter of the Council on Islamic-American Relations.

The meeting, held at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, was convened in response to news reports that the NYPD spied on mosques, businesses and worshippers in Newark and also targeted the Omar Mosque in Paterson for surveillance. Muslim students at Rutgers University and 15 other Northeastern colleges were also subject to surveillance, according to police documents and Associated Press reports.

Bloomberg's defense

The surveillance sparked outcries from many Muslims who said they believed their civil rights were violated and questioned how the NYPD could operate surveillance in New Jersey. The NYPD and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg have defended the surveillance operations as an effective and legal tool to prevent and fight terrorism.

Leading up to Saturday, the heads of several mosques and Muslim organizations were demanding a full investigation into the surveillance. New Jersey Attorney General Jeffrey S. Chiesa said at the meeting that his office was still collecting the necessary information and exploring legal issues before it could authorize an investigation, according to several people who attended. The meeting was closed to the press.

"We're still pushing for an investigation," Kahl said. "That's ultimately where we want to go. We believe an investigation is imminent and we need accountability."

Several mosque leaders said they also did not get answers they had sought about the extent of surveillance, whether local police were involved, and whether the spying operations continue today.

They said the officials told them those are among the issues being looked at by the agencies.

"There are a lot of questions that are unanswered that would bring a greater level of satisfaction that I don't have yet," said Mohamed El Filali, executive director from the Islamic Center of Passaic County.

Amin Nathani, spokesman for the Newark-based Muslim Community Leadership Coalition of New Jersey, said he wanted to know more about the involvement of Newark police and how many more NYPD surveillance reports were out there. The NYPD had amassed a 60-page report on Newark detailing the location, ownership and ethnic makeup of clients at Muslim stores, restaurants and houses of worship in the city. The 2007 report included photographs of those establishments and maps.

It's a start

But Nathani said he believed New Jersey law enforcement was committed to "get to the bottom of the issue and to get some justice." "It's a start. There's still a lot of unanswered questions to be honed with you, but the fact that we're all at the table having dialogue shows commitment and mutual concern," he said.

Also present at the meeting was Paul J. Fishman, the U.S. attorney for New Jersey. Michael B. Ward, the special agent-in-charge of the FBI's Newark division, Edward Dickson, the state's homeland security director, and Rick Fuentes, head of the state police.

The NYPD did not have a representative at the meeting. Law enforcement officials would not say whether the NYPD was involved, but said they had had discussions with representatives of the department. They declined to comment further.

Some Muslims, civil-rights groups and congressmen have called for an investigation.

Fishman wouldn't provide any timeline or say whether in fact a federal investigation would be conducted. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder was still collecting information to decide whether to investigate, he said.

But, he said, "the issues that were raised ... are obviously a huge concern to Arab and Muslim communities in New Jersey. We want them to know we're responsive to their concerns and we want to hear what they have to say."

Several Muslim leaders described the discussion as "frank," and said they believed law enforcement was serious in addressing their concerns about religious discrimination and profiling. They believed the officials where they said they wouldn't condone the same kind of actions in their state.

"We came away with assurances that they will continue to protect our rights as full American citizens and we're appreciative of that reinforcement," said Arel Asaf, president of the American Arab Forum in Paterson. "This message will go back to our community that, at least in New Jersey, law enforcement is on our side and will continue to preserve our basic rights."

For law enforcement, the meeting was a way to reach out to Muslims and contain any possible fallout after years spent going out, reach, and building relationships and sources in those communities. Fishman said preservation of civil liberties and civil liberties was a core goal of the Department of Justice and that he wanted to bolster trust "so [the Department of Justice] can get the cooperation from Muslims and every other community that we expect and want."

Email: osely@northjersey.com

Ex-officer receives probation in DWI crash

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FREEHOLD — A former New Jersey police officer who was driving drunk when he caused an off-duty crash last year that seriously injured a corrections officer has been sentenced to two years of

probation.

Adell of Hazlet, who served with the Manhattan police department, pleaded guilty in December to drunken driving and assault by auto in connection with the March 6 crash in Colts Neck. He agreed to give up his job as part

of a plea deal and had his driver's license suspended for seven months. The head-on collision injured 41-year-old Robert Felix of Keanburg, who was on his way to work at the time. His injuries have required two surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay.

Wildstein hasn't won many friends among longtime agency executives, but that's just fine with Christie.

If he's not liked for that role, and if he's accused of being zealous in that regard, then we pleased him," Drewniak said.

The Port Authority was created

T

William B. Ulrey

~~3000 Pine Road~~
~~Neptune, NJ 08552~~

P: (610) 749-0789

June 3, 2017

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
United States District Judge, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building & U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street, Room 4015
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

As you consider an appropriate sentence for David Wildstein, I am writing to relate a different side of David than perhaps could come through during such an intense and structured trial.

I have known David for nearly thirty years and had the opportunity to work alongside him frequently during that span.

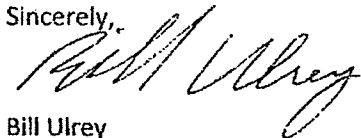
First and foremost, David is devoted to his wife and children. When you get to know David, it quickly becomes apparent that he not only has a very happy marriage that is the cornerstone of his life, but his love for, and attachment to, his wife Robyn has continued to strengthen and grow over the years. David is also completely crazy about their three children, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] of whom David and Robyn both are very, very proud and rightly so, as they are truly wonderful young people.

When this is all said and done, what David fears most about the sentence you decide to hand down is not what your decision will mean for him, but its implications for Robyn, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and their future as a family. David had no inkling of how his actions in the bridge closing would come to hurt so many people. But among his deepest regrets is for the suffering he has already brought to the three of them and the uncertainty of how it will impact their life together.

On a more personal basis, David has always been a wonderful friend to me – extremely considerate, thoughtful and loyal. Today, David is wrestling with some difficult questions....how best he can make amends to those whom he hurt or let down, and how he can be a better person going forward. I share this with you not only because it speaks to the fact that he accepts responsibility for what he has done and is truly and deeply sorry for the suffering he caused others, but also because I think he is asking the right questions about his life and responsibilities going forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Your job is not an easy one, but I hope that this has been some help to you as you consider how justice is best served in David's sentencing.

Sincerely,



Bill Ulrey

u

RAJ MUKHERJI, ESQ.

July 5, 2017

The Honorable Susan D. Wigenton
U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey
Martin Luther King Building and U.S. Courthouse
50 Walnut Street
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Judge Wigenton:

I am an attorney admitted to practice in the District of New Jersey. I first met David Wildstein 15 or 16 years ago, and I have therefore known him for roughly half of my life. Initially, I worked alongside him while providing technological and cybersecurity support at the political news source then known as PoliticsNJ.com that David had founded, helping to keep his identity as the site's editor anonymous in the spirit of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay in authoring the Federalist Papers under the pseudonym "Publius." David had a keen interest in providing mentorship and support to young people interested in the political and policymaking processes. We kept in touch sporadically following my departure from the organization to participate in partisan politics and became reacquainted during my tenure as Deputy Mayor of Jersey City, in which capacity I sought out his assistance regularly on constituent and municipal matters involving the Port Authority.

"To err is human; to forgive, divine," wrote Alexander Pope. That's not to trivialize David's actions. He and I have not discussed the substance of the criminal matter in which he has pled guilty, save for a request for the instant sentencing letter. What I know is limited to what I've read in news coverage. Nevertheless, from what I have read, he betrayed the trust of the public and those who gave him an opportunity to serve, he endangered some of those citizens and inconvenienced countless others, and he committed a serious and inexcusable crime for which he has accepted responsibility and for which he will pay for the rest of his life.

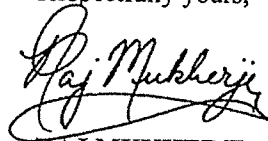
This accomplished businessman, former news editor, husband, and father will be permanently haunted by the stigma of a felony conviction. And as you know, because the conviction is federal, David will not have the opportunity (that countless state-level offenders enjoy) to apply for an expungement some years in the future because no such remedy is available at the federal level. He has forfeited any ability to serve in public office and his lifelong dream of working in the political or policy spheres. Due to the widespread publicity surrounding this matter, David, his wife, and his children may never escape the shame attendant to his wrongdoing. In so many ways – and most respectfully – no sentence Your Honor could impose will have more of a deterrent effect than the consequences David has already suffered.

On the other hand, I have witnessed a profound change in David's demeanor and personality. The once-always-restless political junkie has found a silver lining in his legal clouds, taking advantage of the time previously devoted to his professional life to focus on his family and find inner peace. He is truly remorseful for his wrongdoing and seems to be devastated by the impact of his actions. This may have contributed to his decision to cooperate with the United States and atone. Moreover, the political world he once loved, the world he aspired to enter since childhood as a political wunderkind, has no place for him anymore and never again will, and he seems to be perfectly at peace with that. There is no risk of him reoffending. Somewhere along the way, David grew intoxicated with his newfound power, but he has woken up to a hangover that ensures it will never recur.

It is especially a shame because David possesses extraordinary attention to detail; an encyclopedic knowledge of history, politics, and government; and a razor-sharp memory that would have allowed him to contribute in so many ways to our democracy if his public service had not been interrupted as a result of his actions. During his tenure as the infamous "Wally Edge," he had a soft spot for staffers and behind-the-scenes political operatives, a penchant for promoting youth aspiring to hold public office or enter the political arena, and a mission to fight apathy in our democracy. When the website was sold to *The New York Observer*, he was so fiercely protective of the myriad of sources he had developed over the years that he would not allow negotiations to progress unless he retained full ownership of the AOL e-mail address that so many sources had used to communicate with him over the years. With no formal training or prior experience as a journalist, David exhibited an uncompromising commitment to principles that conventional reporters hold sacred.

I ask that the Court consider these factors and the impact of the ordeal on his innocent wife and children in determining an appropriate sentence for a defendant who has certainly learned his lesson. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,



RAJ MUKHERJI

Y

7/5/2017

Gmail - Fwd: FW: David Wildstein...



David Wildstein <[REDACTED]>

Fwd: FW: David Wildstein...

1 message

Michael Drewniak <[REDACTED]>
To: David Wildstein <[REDACTED]>

Fri, Dec 6, 2013 at 5:19 PM

This was my revised -- which I sent to the Gov and he approved (no Maria or Charlie).

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michael Drewniak <[REDACTED]>
Date: Fri, Dec 6, 2013 at 5:17 PM
Subject: FW: David Wildstein...
To: [REDACTED]

From: Michael Drewniak
Sent: Friday, December 06, 2013 5:14 PM
To: 'Boburg, Shawn'
Subject: David Wildstein...

Please use this, attributable to me:

"Mr. Wildstein has been a tireless advocate for New Jersey's interests at the Port Authority. We are grateful for his commitment and dedication to the important work of the Port Authority and thank him for his service to the people of New Jersey and the region."

Michael Drewniak

Press Secretary to NJ Governor Chris Christie

email: [REDACTED]

Press Office: 609-777-2600

Blackberry: 609-433-5398